

<b>Candidate name (first and last):</b>	Katjana Ballantyne
<b>Office the candidate is seeking:</b>	Mayor of Somerville
<b>1. In your role as mayor, how do you plan to work with the statewide delegation to advance your policy priorities, and what are your specific state policy priorities related to transportation, housing, and climate? [1200 character limit]</b>	Key priorities - transportation, housing, climate. I'll continue working on initiatives like: Transportation safety design for state roads that interact with city streets. Air quality improvements, particularly in EJ communities, for highway pollution and greenhouse gas emissions Remediation through sound walls, air filtration, plantings mitigating particulate matter Fare free buses Electrification of MBTA buses and commuter rail Increased EV for all infrastructure and municipal vehicles Climate change bill (FUTURE Act) affects building codes moving towards cleaner heating Financing for public and affordable housing Increasing bicycle and pedestrian access with complimentary street infrastructure
<b>2. How do you see transportation, housing, and climate issues connecting and how will you work to align them if elected? [600 character limit]</b>	Transit-oriented urban environments that create people-centered cities help us to combat climate change and to create affordable housing because they allow residents to limit automobile use, to be efficient in energy and utility uses, thereby reducing carbon footprint, and allowing affordable housing development at a scale that can be economic. As Mayor I'll work to implement the goals of the Somerville Green New Deal, which I authored and sponsored, I'll continue using every tool to make housing affordable and jobs accessible to residents. I'll work for complete, accessible, safe streets.
<b>3. In recent years, the City of Somerville has had strong Mayoral leadership on transportation issues that has been crucial in moving key projects. Often street projects designed to improve safety and public transit infrastructure face opposition due to removing on-street parking or reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes. As Mayor, how will you be a strong advocate and leader on transportation issues amidst pushback? [1200 character limit]</b>	I'll continue to advocate for our pedestrian, bus and bike lane improvements. Eight out of ten cars on our streets are commuters driving through our city. Our transit network should support Somerville first. Pedestrian, bus and bike features make our streets better for local users, including residents and businesses, and not for commuters driving through. Data shows that these features encourage walking, biking and bus use, so they reduce traffic leaving more parking available. More pedestrians means more shoppers in local, shops and more diners in local restaurants. In the past, some business owners were reluctant to lose a parking space to a bike share, bus lane or to a dining corral. Now however, more and more businesses and residents are beginning to see positive change in our streets and they are becoming more supportive of the benefits to complete, accessible, safe streets as our experience begins to confirm the predictions of data and planning.
<b>1a. Which of the following modes of transportation do you use regularly in Somerville? (Check the top 3.)</b>	Bus, Bike (bike-share or personal bicycle), Walking
<b>1b. What types of housing have you lived in or owned throughout your life? (Check all that apply.)</b>	As a renter, As a landlord, Home ownership, Urban, Rural, 2 family, Somerville home
<b>1. Somerville has just initiated a process to create a citywide bicycle network plan which will show how street space will be allocated to create bike infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities. How will you work to ensure that this network will be built in a timely manner? [1200 character limit]</b>	As Mayor I will be committed to creating complete, accessible, safe streets in Somerville that work for all Somerville users first and foremost. Our streets should accommodate bicycles, buses, pedestrians, and our streets should serve the needs of Somerville residents, institutions and businesses as a priority. As Mayor I will advocate for funding and implementation of the planned citywide bike network and I will: • Work with neighborhood advocates and SBAC to design a bike network that connects every neighborhood, every square, every school etc. The plan should follow NACTO "All Ages & Abilities" guidelines: physically protected bike lanes on major streets, but can do neighborways on quieter streets or for local access. • Ensure adequate funding and staffing for Mobility, Engineering, and DPW to design, build, and maintain bike lanes. • Require the bike network plan be followed during street reconstruction, similar to Cambridge's 2019 Cycling Safety Ordinance • Require City staff to build a certain mileage of protected bike lanes per year, similar to the 2020 amendments to Cambridge's Cycling Safety Ordinance
<b>2. What strategies do you support to improve accessible pedestrian infrastructure, particularly for those with vision impairments or using mobility assistive devices? [1200 character limit]</b>	As mayor, I will be committed to making street network ADA compliant to accommodate users of all abilities. I committed to supporting: • Increased funding for Somerville to accelerate progress against its \$75M ADA backlog to more quickly build curb ramps, clear sidewalks, and audible walk signals. • Embracing outdoor dining parklets/strateries, we need to ensure that they are fully accessible, both for people dining there and for people walking or rolling by. • Clear complaint process for people to report violations • Expanding DPW's snow clearance responsibilities to include clearing sidewalks. In winter months, inconsistent sidewalk shoveling can make sidewalks impassable; municipal snow clearance would make it easier for everyone to use our sidewalks in the winter.
<b>3. SomerVision 2040 mobility goals include reducing Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and prioritizing walking, biking, and transit access. How will you continue to implement the City's Complete Streets Ordinance for both short-term and long-term projects? [1200 character limit]</b>	To implement the SomerVision 2040 mobility goals on long and short term projects I will: • Work to define and implement specific requirements to improve our streets so that we can accomplish our goals according to a clear plan of action. Somerville's Complete Streets Ordinance sets excellent goals, as mayor I'll work to get this done. • Advocate to include durable, long lasting materials like planters or pre-cast curbs in our quick-build projects. So that short term projects help to achieve our long term goals. • Somerville's projects are too often either short-term paint-and-flexposts projects that provide insufficient protection, or full reconstructions that take many years to deliver safety improvements. We can do better and as mayor, I'll work build our complete, accessible, safe streets in both short term and long term projects.
<b>4. Some of the more dangerous roads in Somerville are owned by state agencies, including McGrath Highway and Mystic Avenue. How will you work with and push state agencies, such as MassDOT and DCR, to make much needed changes to improve safety along busy corridors? [1200 character limit]</b>	As mayor, I'll continue supporting safety improvements where they are required and I'll work closely with the state delegation to make the improvements happen, as I did locally with pedestrian safety improvements in West Somerville all along Powderhouse Boulevard, and as I did in making the intersection redesign project and safety improvements happen at the intersection of Powderhouse Boulevard and Mystic Valley Parkway.
<b>5. While the MBTA controls bus service, the City of Somerville controls the streets the buses operate on. How would you accelerate bus service and bus priority infrastructure? [1200 character limit]</b>	While MBTA runs buses, Somerville can work to ensure that buses move smoothly rather than getting stuck in traffic. As mayor, I'll work for more of the following improvements: • Dedicated bus lanes / queue jump bus lanes • Expand traffic signal priority, so buses get a green light more quickly. While Somerville has piloted transit signal priority at a handful of intersections, we should move past the pilot and implement signal priority at lights on the bus routes. • Build out the curb at bus stops, so that buses can stop in-lane without merging in and out of traffic, and there's more room for bus shelters and benches. • Build "floating bus stops" so bikes can travel behind the bus stop, reducing conflicts between buses and bikes
<b>6. Through the Bus Network Redesign process, how would you ensure those who need bus service are able to provide feedback and have their needs heard through the process? [1200 character limit]</b>	I'm committed to an inclusive leadership style to ensure that residents are at the table in making decisions that affect their life's quality. I will reach out by all means, by social media, by mail and by calling. I'll host and advertise meetings according to a publicly available schedule that is published well in advance. Most importantly I'll listen, and I'll value the voices of our residents.
<b>7. Living near high traffic roadways causes public health issues, such as increased rates of asthma, due to the pollution caused by vehicle traffic. In Somerville, environmental justice communities experience the burden of bordering I-93. How would you work to mitigate and address issues of health equity in these communities that result from car traffic? [1200 character limit]</b>	I'll keep working with MassDOT for remediation through sound walls, air filtration, plantings mitigating particulate matter, to build noise walls along the length of I-93 through Somerville, especially in East Somerville. I'll advocate for planting dense vegetation along the highway to help absorb pollution.
<b>8. The MA state legislature is considering creating a new dedicated governance board for the MBTA, emulating the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB). Given this, how would you utilize the board meetings to advocate on important issues that might be outside the City's control? [1200 character limit]</b>	FMCB has indicated that when allocating bus service hours, they prefer to run buses on streets with dedicated bus lanes or signal priority so that the buses are used efficiently. I will reach out to the FMCB to offer assistance and planning partnership with MBTA to run frequent, reliable, high-quality bus service. Somerville has been too often left without sufficient bus service. I will advocate work to secure service that is appropriate for our City and I'll address the board directly and by building support from other stake-holders in Somerville.

<p><b>9. Somerville is expected to get tens of millions of stimulus dollars from the federal government. How would you prioritize spending those funds, and how would housing and transportation priorities fit into that plan? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Substantial stimulus funding indicates that we'll need an open, inclusive, public process to determine how to fund our priorities in Somerville. Priorities will likely include funding a COVID 19 recovery plan for Somerville with funding for childcare, education, youth and family services, the Guaranteed Income Program trial, and local, small business recovery stimulus.</p> <p>Local infrastructure initiatives like building ADA compliance into complete, safe streets while implementing pedestrian, bus and bike improvements, extending and completing the community path, establishing city-wide broad band, funding free public transportation are all projects that would serve us in both the short and long term.</p> <p>In affordability and housing we could fund the Jobs Creation and Retention Trust Fund and a Community Land Trust Fund, and many other affordability initiatives. To combat climate change we could plant trees, build infrastructure to managing flooding, renovate our city buildings to with more efficient mechanical and envelop systems and we could improve our parks and green spaces.</p> <p>This stimulus could make a start on transit-oriented urban environments that create people-centered cities help us to combat climate change and to create affordable housing because by allowing us to support affordable housing development, and to implement the goals of the Somerville Green New Deal. I'll advocate to use this stimulus to make housing affordable and jobs accessible to residents and to build our local network of complete, accessible, safe streets.</p>
<p><b>10. What do you propose Somerville should do with the \$30M community contribution for Green Line Extension that is being returned? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>This funding could make our new train stations accessible. The ramps that were proposed as cost - saving measures, were never satisfying as a solution and elevators are simply required at several stations to make those new stations accessible. We can also consider traffic calming, focusing on highest crash corridors, expand transit access for the areas of Somerville least served by GLX to make sure it benefits the entire city, add bus lanes and transit signal priority for improving bus service connecting to GLX, build protected bike lanes on north/south streets so people can safely bike to the Green Line and Community Path.</p> <p>And we could bring Bluebikes to neighborhoods not yet served, like Brickbottom and Ten Hills, and fill in other gaps in Bluebikes coverage.</p>
<p><b>11. A recent report from the MBTA found that the Green Line Extension (GLX) project will largely benefit higher-income, white residents, after an initial study 10 years ago determined the project would benefit environmental justice communities slightly more. How would you ensure that lower-income residents continue to benefit from transportation improvements and have access to affordable housing near transportation? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>As mayor, I'll continue my leadership in working for affordability and new affordable housing to prevent the displacement of lower-income Somerville residents so that they can benefit from living close to the new GLX train stations. High housing costs disproportionately effect immigrant communities, people of color, and people with disabilities. I'll keep working for affordability, in the pedestrian zones of the transformative areas. I'll advocate to ensure that 20% of affordable units are built in-place near new GLX station. I'll keep working to vulnerable resident groups to have access to job training, jobs and career ladders, and I'll continue my support for programs like The 2000 Homes Program, The Ordinance for Condo Conversion, The Office of Housing Stability, The Jobs Creation and Retention Trust Fund, The Talent Equity Playbook, The Community Land Trust, the work of the Fair Housing Commission and more. As mayor, I'll continue to advocate for free bus service and free or reduced-fare train service for all, but especially for income-eligible groups and essential community members working in education, health care, public safety and others</p>
<p><b>12. In a new housing development where space is limited, and parking adds substantially to the cost, how would you prioritize space/think about tradeoffs (between more units, parking, open space, etc.)? What would you do in the face of community opposition to developments that seek to balance these priorities? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>As mayor, I will continue my three decades of advocacy for mixed-use smart, appropriately dense development with low parking ratios, especially for new, multi-family projects, near transit, that provide affordable housing. I will prioritize developing a local transit network of complete, accessible, safe streets in Somerville. We know from traffic and RE market data, and I know from decades of personal experience, that Somerville is at a tipping point, and that Somerville is becoming a city that can thrive with fewer cars. As our local transportation and mobility options are improved by improved street design and construction, by improved GLX and bus service, personal car ownership and the local use of cars will become less necessary. As more new businesses and jobs move to Somerville, more residents will be able to live and work in Somerville without commuting by car. As I have done in three decades of advocating for the GLX and regional transit improvements, and as I have done in eight years hosting community meetings while serving as an elected official, I will use data and community discussion to help us to balance these development priorities.</p>
<p><b>13. Somerville's inclusionary housing program requires that new developments of over 18 units include at least 20% of the new units be affordable and income-restricted. There is conversation about increasing the program's percentage; however, experience and research around the country has shown that setting the percentage too high can actually reduce the total number of new affordable units built. Would you support a new 12 unit building where 50% of the units are affordable over a 60 unit building where 20% of the units are affordable? Why? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>The question of percentage is one of many considerations to make housing both affordable and equitable. A 60 unit building with 20% of affordable units will create more affordable units than a 12 unit building with 50% of affordable units. Also the cause of housing equity may favor a 20% ratio of affordable units to create a more equitable distribution of affordable units city-wide.</p> <p>In eight years as a councilor and as the president of the city council I have sponsored, supported and voted for many initiatives to prevent displacement and to make housing and Somerville more affordable such as, Inclusionary Zoning requiring 25% affordable units in new housing development, The 2000 Homes Program, The Ordinance for Condo Conversion, The Office of Housing Stability, The Jobs Creation and Retention Trust Fund, The Talent Equity Playbook, The Community Land Trust, the work of the Fair Housing Commission and more.</p> <p>As mayor, I will continue working to make housing more affordable, and to advocate initiatives that help us achieve housing options, that are safe, healthy, affordable, inclusive and equitable.</p>
<p><b>14. Increasing density is one of the goals of SomerVision to advance the housing stock and affordability, but Somerville's zoning code restricts how dense housing can be built. There's also pushback because Somerville is already "the densest city in New England" with ~80% of the city made up of two and three family houses. How would you address pushback and ensure that Somerville can meet its density goals set goals in SomerVision 2040? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>I'll continue to advocate for appropriate density in the transformative areas of Somerville, where transit-oriented environments support density. Concerns about density, like potential increases in traffic or competition for on-street parking, are often concerns about the density of cars, traffic, noise and air pollution, and not the density of people. We need to make it easier to build more housing, especially affordable homes, while we improve transportation and mobility options to serve the density that we would allow. The right level of density can help us to combat climate change and to create affordable housing, because density can allow residents to limit automobile use, to be efficient in energy and utility uses, thereby reducing carbon footprint, and allowing affordable housing development at a scale that can be economic.</p>
<p><b>15. What actions or policies that fall under existing municipal powers (i.e., do not require a home rule petition) do you support to help prevent displacement? [1200 character limit]</b></p>	<p>As Mayor, I'll use every available tool to work for affordability and to prevent displacement, I will investigate collaboration with non-profit developers or SHA to create new developments as purpose-built affordable housing under the Affordable Housing Overlay District zoning.</p> <p>I'll advocate incentivizing the development of housing that is affordable to households with incomes closer to 30% of AMI (e.g., all the service industry workers earning at or below \$15/hour), and consider providing permanent property tax forgiveness.</p> <p>For property owners who have been unable to keep up with their mortgages due to (a) COVID-related loss of income, and/or (b) COVID-related tenant inability to pay the rent (and failure to obtain rental assistance), use ARP funds to help them catch up with their mortgage and property taxes (and to repay any loans they had to take out to cover their mortgage or property taxes due.</p> <p>Provide down payment assistance to households seeking to purchase a condo for their own primary residence.</p>
<p><b>1. The Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition supports the removal of direct policing from Vision Zero goals, citing issues of equity and a lack of effectiveness in improving safety. You can read about these issues in the Vision Zero Somerville 2020 Report Card and the Coalition Statement on Gov. Baker Administration's Road Safety Legislation. Do you support removing police enforcement from Vision Zero? Please explain. [300 character limit]</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p> <p>I agree with and I will support Vision Zero's "safe systems approach," prioritizing planning, engineering, and policy—not policing and punishment—to make streets safer. We should work first to create a "safe systems" approach to traffic safety rooted in prevention.</p>
<p><b>2. Police details are often required for construction projects and open streets events -- it would save money and create jobs if community members were allowed to do this work. Civilian flaggers were first authorized in 2008 to help fill these roles in Massachusetts; nevertheless, these projects and events are still primarily staffed by police on overtime, and detail requests often go unfilled entirely. Do you support reducing police involvement in streets-related projects and events?</b></p>	<p>Strongly Support</p>

<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	Civilian flaggers can play a role especially when our Police Department is not over-staffed and when there are so many infrastructure projects needed.
<b>3. One key strategy that has been proven to effectively reduce speeding, improve safety, and remove racial bias in traffic enforcement in other states and countries is automated enforcement (i.e., speed cameras and red-light cameras). The MA Vision Zero Coalition is specifically supportive of the following bills due to their strong protections around equity and data privacy, H.2426, H.2532, S.1545. If the State House passes this automated enforcement legislation and allows cities &amp; towns to opt-in to a speed or red-light camera program, would you support your municipality using this tool?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	A recent study found that "Speeding at the typical fixed camera location has dropped 71.5 percent, and injuries have dropped by 16.9 percent. Automated enforcement is highly effective at preventing dangerous speeding
<b>4. Do you support filing a home rule petition for the City of Somerville to implement automated enforcement within the municipality if legislation is not passed at the state level? If you are supportive, please describe how you would ensure the crucial equity and data provisions are included in the petition.</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	We will need to include measures to protect equity and create unbiased enforcement.
<b>5. Many injuries from traffic crashes happen on busier arterial roads. Do you support traffic calming for high-crash intersections and roadways of arterials to prevent crashes and save lives, even when it means taking away parking or travel lanes?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	Life safety and the safety of vulnerable road users must be prioritized before parking.
<b>6. Mode shift occurs when people get out of their cars and choose other ways of getting around. Do you support the City's SomerVision 2040 goal of reducing vehicular traffic so that 75% of work commutes are made via non-car mode by 2040?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	I strongly support transit-oriented development and accessible, complete, safe streets create walkable cities where residents do not require a car for local mobility or commuting.
<b>7. To achieve many of Somerville's stated goals in Vision Zero and Somervision 2040, additional curb space will need to be reallocated from parking to create safe bike infrastructure, bus lanes, and pedestrian improvements. The current price for residential parking permits in Somerville is approximately \$3.33 a month, while the market rate for off street parking is much higher. Do you support raising the annual fee for residential parking permits?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	I support appropriate price increases with discounts for income-eligible and essential residents. I support the on-going Somerville Parking Policy Study and task force.
<b>8. Do you support free bus service on the MBTA, and a low-income fare option for other public transit options?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	The benefits of public transportation are vast, these include health, environment, safety and many more. We must find a way to make public transportation effective, attractive and affordable.
<b>9. Are you supportive of an ordinance similar to Cambridge's Cycling Safety Ordinance which would require protected bike lanes designated in the upcoming bike plan to be built on city streets when they are being reconstructed?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	Dedicated bike lanes make city streets safer and more useful for all users.
<b>Adding parking to housing developments is expensive and increases the cost of housing. Mandatory parking minimums for new developments near MBTA train stops have been eliminated. Do you support eliminating parking minimums city-wide?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	Reducing parking requirements will require adjusting the number of allowed cars per property.
<b>11. Improvements to affordable housing in Somerville requires not only increasing production and allocation, but also increasing the amount of housing that will maintain its affordable status in perpetuity. Do you support the goal of making 20% of Somerville's housing stock affordable in perpetuity by 2040?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	The need of housing is perpetual.
<b>12. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) adds a 1.5% surcharge on net property taxes and qualifies the city to receive matching funds from the statewide Community Preservation Trust Fund to help support affordable housing in Somerville. It received a 76% approval as a ballot question in 2015. Do you support increasing this surcharge to further support affordable housing as part of CPA?</b>	Strongly Support
<b>Please explain. [300 character limit]</b>	Increasing our surcharge will allow us access to more CPA Funding for local preservation projects and affordable housing.